

Publication: The Economic Times

Date: November 1, 2014

Aircel Eyes Tie-ups for Music Products to Draw Data Users

Telco sees higher demand for music, with users willing to pay a premium

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New Delhi: Telecom service provider Aircel is looking to forge more partnerships to offer music products and services as it aims to increase its data subscriber base and boost data consumption on its network.

The move comes amid an internal research by the company indicating that subscribers are keen to consume music and are ready to pay a premium for it. Its drive is part of industry-wide efforts to get subscribers to use more of the premium and high margin data services which are expected to fuel future growth in the sector.

The service provider has formed alliances in recent months with handset maker Micromax and a music streaming app to launch music smartphone Canvas Beat and a music morning service, respectively. It also introduced 'Cut Your Dialer Tune' service that al-

lows customers to listen, choose and set their favourite part of a song as dialler tune.

"Music is an integral part of Aircel's strategy to redefine data user experience. The intent behind introduction of various music offerings was to increase data penetration and usage among the company's users, especially the youth," Anupam Vasudev, chief marketing officer at Aircel, told ET, adding that the company also wanted to tap first-time users and could go in for more such partnerships to increase data uptake on its network.

The music morning service is part of Aircel's '3G Mornings' umbrella wherein it wants to induce trials for data usage on its network

ments of regional and local music, Vasudev said.

Under the 3G Mornings scheme, Aircel is offering free 3G data usage from 6 am to 9 am to new subscribers. Vasudev said the partnership with the music streaming app has

worked well as the company has seen a 200% increase in consumption on the portal since the launch of the offering while the mobile radio service has seen increased uptake in markets such as eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Jammu & Kashmir.

"The mobile radio service is being enjoyed by over 3.5 lakh subscribers, contributing to more than six million minutes of usage," Vasudev said.

Music has emerged as one of the key data drivers for the company as music related offerings allow subscribers to explore new forms of content consumption – from downloading to streaming, coupled with availability of affordable devices and high-speed broadband, according to Vasudev.

According to the British Recorded Music Industry-Digital Music Nation report, for many consumers mobile phone has become the primary device for digital music consumption. While previously PCs or laptops were the main hubs for music online, consumers are now moving towards mobile centric music consumption, the report suggests.

The GSM service provider has 3G licences in 13 telecom circles and has more than two million 3G subscribers in the country.